Mr Gullick E-6 [9/12/]1954 MEE Lebanon MEE

frequent but it was less for the other two new cultural factors which altered village life:

1. The introduction into Lebanon of Western-style educational institutions and methods. The two main types were American Protestant and French Catholic. It was the former which exerted the stronger influence on el-Mismiyeh. Mission schools were established in the village before the turn of the century, and many village children were sent to the American schools in Tripoli. By 1914, some villagers were themselves teaching school in el-Mismiyeh. Denominational feuding was for the most part eradicated, but the quest for secular education — in both Arabic and English — became a major concern in the village. The enthusiasm with which the villagers approached education can be accounted for in several ways. First, the literate individual has always been a person of high prestige in the Arab world. The villagers therefore recognized the fine opportunity for the improvement of personal status which was opened by the new schools. Second, they recognized that through education they would have a better chance of obtaining lucrative jobs and of thus averting the economic disaster which threatened them. Third, the American-sponsored curricula were, in part, a useful introduction to certain aspects of the culture of the West; and this brings us to the third major factor:

2. Emigration, primarily to the United States but also, to a lesser extent, to South America. It is very significant, from the cultural point of view, that the prime motive of the emigrants was not to leave their homeland forever in order to make a new life in a new country, but rather to stay temporarily in America in order to make a fortune and then return to the village to resume the old life under conditions of greater financial security. As it turned out, the majority of emigrants never did return. But the number who did, and the number of those who came and went several times before making up their minds, is often overlooked in general accounts of the emigration phenomenon. Remittances from America helped greatly to make the two decades before 1914 a prosperous time for el-Mismiyeh. It was during this period that the very handsome houses with red tile roofs (imported from France) were built. During this period, also, some of those who did not emigrate took up nonagricultural jobs, such as school teaching, away from the village.

World War I brought a sudden halt to these developments. Owing to the Turkish blockade of Lebanon, emigration became impossible and the flood of remittances was reduced to a trickle. Toward the end of the war there was famine in el-Mismiyeh, and it was reported that two persons died as a result of it. After the war, emigration and remittances were resumed. But the large-scale exodus to the United States was effectively ended by the U.S. Immigration Act of 1924, which allowed only a very small quota for the Levant. Emigration to other areas continued but also on a smaller

LEBANON ME1

Chapter 6

LEBANON

Developments in the Set of the Second World War

433 Lebanon's high economic level, compared with other Middle Eastern countries,
439 is largely attributable to certain factors which helped to improve economic and
social conditions, 1/ from early modern times. A relatively greater degree of
371 security in Lebanon attracted European merchants, who provided an expanding
167 market for Lebanese raw silk. It also brought in missionaries and educators, who
established modern schools. In the second half of the nineteenth century,
large-scale emigration began. It is estimated that, between 1860 and 1920, some
120,000 persons emigrated from Lebanon and Syria - an average of 3,000 a year, of
169 whom over half were from Lebanon. In 1910-14, the yearly average rose to
15,000. 2/ A large number of these emigrants returned, bringing back with them
capital and skills. There was also a small capital inflow from Europe, which
was invested in railways, ports and other public utilities, as well as in banks.
By 1900, Beirut had become the main distributing centre for Lebanon, Syria,
Palestine, northern Iraq and southern Anatolia. Another important economic
item was the export of raw silk.

739 During the First World War, Lebanon, which had become a food importer,
[try] experienced a large-scale famine. In addition, the silk industry was
733 disorganized, the mulberry trees being cut down for fuel, and its transit trade
167 was disrupted. In the inter-war period, silk suffered further, from the
competition of more efficient producers and of rayon, and gradually ceased to
play an important part in the economy. A still harder blow was the decline in
emigration, following restrictions imposed in most countries of immigration.
After reaching a peak of 16,300 in 1923, emigration from Lebanon and Syria fell
off rapidly to an annual average of 2,200 in the nineteen-thirties, of whom
slightly over half came from Lebanon.

---

439 1/ Net national income in 1955 was estimated at 1,550 million Lebanese pounds
(see table 431), giving a per capita figure of 1,310 per annum. (Some
confirmation of this figure is provided by a survey in North Lebanon which
showed that in 1953 per capita income in a group of villages was L 287.
This figure does not include rent, since practically all families own their
own houses (Salah H. Dampa, Household Income and Expenditure in Al Bara,
unpublished thesis, American University, Beirut, 1957). Converted at the
average free market rate in 1955 one United States dollar equalled
3.47 Lebanese pounds), which considerably underestimates the purchasing power
of the Lebanese pound, this gives a per capita income of $378, a figure
well above that prevailing in the region. Some two thirds of the Lebanese
population is literate, and over 40 per cent is urban, proportions which
are well above the regional level.

2/ H.H. Hitchen (editor), The Economic Development of Syria (Beirut, 1956),
page 16.